

Remarks:

Claims 10-20 remain in this case and all claims stand rejected.

In the subject Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 10, 11, 13-17, 19, and 20 as anticipated by Jakeš *et al.* The Examiner also rejected claims 12, and 18 as obvious over Jakeš *et al.* in view of Ward.

The present invention is directed to a movable crucible that retains and transports green workpieces, which move with the workpieces through a microwave sintering process. During microwave sintering, material to be sintered is subjected to energy that results in heat being generated inside the entire volume of the workpieces, but the workpieces retain their form and shape.

In contrast, Jakeš *et al.* has nothing to do with sintering. Rather, Jakeš *et al.* relates to heat treatment of raw materials for production of a melt. The crucibles shown and described in Jakeš *et al.* are incapable of carrying, retaining, and transporting green workpieces through the apparatus. In this reference, a first chamber has a first chamber crucible, a first chamber inlet for a raw material leading to the first chamber crucible, at least one first chamber microwave generator, and a first chamber outlet for a melt formed from the raw material. Thus, this apparatus is incapable of moving green workpieces through the apparatus. Nor can the apparatus be modified to carry out this function, as taught in the disclosure.

Claims 10, 11, 13-17, 19, and 20 should now be in condition for allowance and the applicants request early allowance.

The Examiner also rejected claims 12 and 18 as obvious over Jakeš *et al.* in view of Ward. Ward is cited for the teaching of a crucible made of an alloy of alumina and silicon nitride. Since Ward neither shows nor suggests a means of modifying Jakeš *et al.* to carry green workpieces, claims 12 and 18 should also be in condition for allowance.

The Applicants assert that all claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully request early allowance. If the Examiner believes that a phone conference would expedite this case to issue, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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